

Dissertation Guide

Prepared for Students of West Texas A&M

by

Staff of Graduate School

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## INTRODUCTION

The following information is intended to summarize the major elements of dissertation preparation. Students should consult their dissertation advisers and/or the style manual of their academic discipline for answers to questions that are particular to their research project. Consult the Associate Dean of Graduate School with any concerns you have about format or style.

Sometimes the instructions in this guide will conflict with the standards of a particular discipline or the needs of a particular project. If that happens, the Associate Dean of Graduate School can coordinate with dissertation advisers for a solution.

When beginning the dissertation, students should always choose their subject, major advisers and committee members carefully. Furthermore, students should realize that the dissertation is a creative process that will usually take longer than *a priori* expectations.

## PROCEDURES FOR DISSERTATION STUDENTS

For students to smoothly complete the final part of their degrees while they are writing their dissertation, it is important for them to be aware of and to follow the necessary procedures of West Texas A&M. This section outlines the University and Graduate School procedures for graduate students. As they begin their dissertations, doctoral students,

- Must register for AGRI 8000 when research begins and in each subsequent semester except summer terms until the Dean of Graduate School has accepted the dissertation. Students on an assistantship must register for one summer session each year while on an assistantship.
- Students who graduate in the summer must enroll in AGRI 8000 in one of the two summer sessions in year of graduation.
- Students may only have to pay the current tuition rate for each enrollment of Dissertation. Under certain circumstances, West Texas A&M may waive all additional fees. To qualify, students can submit the [form](#) found on Graduate School's Webpage.
- Students must be continuously enrolled to complete their degrees. Students who fail to enroll in AGRI 8000 will be subject to a reinstatement fee when returning to West Texas A&M. Exceptions to this policy require prior arrangement with a student's department head and the Dean of Graduate School.

## **Dissertation Committee**

During a student's first dissertation enrollment (or before), students should consult with their program coordinator to appoint a committee. Each doctoral committee will have:

- At least five faculty who are members of the WTAMU Graduate Faculty. The Chair must have full membership.
- At least three members from the Department of Agricultural Sciences (one of each from three of the following: Agricultural Business and Economics (AGBE), Agriculture (AGRI), Animal Science (ANSC), and Plant, Soil and Environmental Science (PSES)).
- At least one member from outside the Department of Agricultural Sciences. This committee member could be from another department within WTAMU or from outside WTAMU. The outside member must be a member of the Graduate Faculty.
- No more than two members from a given discipline with the department of Agricultural Sciences (AGBE, AGRI, ANSC, and PSES) can be on the committee. The Department Head and College Dean can make exceptions, if necessary.

## **Research Compliance**

West Texas A&M University is committed to following all federal and state regulations, as well as the Texas A&M University System policies and regulations, and West Texas A&M University rules and procedures concerning research compliance, including research under the oversight of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects (IRB), and the Institutional Animal Care and Usage Committee (IACUC). For a comprehensive review of these compliance procedures, please view the following link: [http://www.wtamu.edu/environmental\\_safety/academic-research-environmental-safety.aspx](http://www.wtamu.edu/environmental_safety/academic-research-environmental-safety.aspx)

**Before** you begin your dissertation research, please consult with your major adviser and other faculty in your program for guidance as to what approvals you will

need to begin your research. Additionally, for further information, you may contact the research office at 806.651.2270

Upon completion of your research, Graduate School requires a hard copy of your research approval letter(s) from the applicable research committee(s). Please submit this with your title page, signature page and abstract. Please note: There are some types of research that does not require research committee approval – contact your advisor or the research office for confirmation. Conducting unapproved research is a serious research compliance violation and will be investigated according to university procedures:

[15.99.05.W1.05AR WTAMU Potential Non-Compliance in the Course of Human Subjects Research](#)

[15.99.05.W1.07AR WTAMU Potential Non-Compliance in the Course of Vertebrate Animal Care and Use Research](#)

[15.99.03.W1.04AR Ethics in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work: Research Misconduct](#)

### **Research Committee Descriptions**

The following is a description of the WTAMU research compliance committees. The following link connects to list of committee members:

<https://wtaccess.wtamu.edu/committees/>

*Institutional Review Board (IRB):* The Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects ascertains the acceptability of proposed research involving human subjects. The IRB is charged with the protection of human subjects used in research at the University by complying with regulations specified by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) operating under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as with other ethical and professional standards. The IRB is advisory to the Vice President

of Research and Compliance who reports to the President on all matters relating to research and compliance. For additional information, please visit: [www.wtamu.edu/irb](http://www.wtamu.edu/irb)

*Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):* The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee is charged with the protection of animal subjects used in research at the University by complying with regulations specified by the Animal Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. 2131-2159; 9CFR 2.22,2.80, and 37102(g) and operating under the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The IACUC is advisory to the Vice President of Research and Compliance who reports to the President on all matters relating to research and compliance. For additional information, please visit: [www.wtamu.edu/iacuc](http://www.wtamu.edu/iacuc)

*The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC):* The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) is responsible for reviewing and approving recombinant DNA, infectious agents, and biohazard research at WTAMU and has overall oversight responsibility for the Biosafety Program at WTAMU as required by the Biohazardous Use Authorization (BUA). IBC members and chair are appointed in accordance with National Institutes of Health Guidelines. The IBC is advisory to the Vice President of Research and Compliance who reports to the President on all matters relating to research and compliance. For additional information, please visit: [www.wtamu.edu/ibc](http://www.wtamu.edu/ibc)

### **Dissertation Deadlines**

Each semester, Graduate School posts when dissertations are due. Students should consult the Graduate School Calendar.

- Nine weeks before graduation: The preliminary draft of the entire dissertations should be turned in to the student's major adviser.
- Five weeks before graduation: The final copy of the dissertation should be presented to the major adviser and to the Associate Dean of Graduate School for final checks of content and format. This copy should be in pdf format and must be submitted to Graduate School through the [Viero system](#).
- After final approval of the dissertation by the committee and by Graduate School, a signature page must be circulated among the student's committee, department, college and Graduate School for required signatures. Please note that all dissertations will be uploaded to the WTAMU institutional repository, and the signature page will not be included in this submission.
- In addition to the signature page, Graduate School requires that students submit a paper copy of their title page and abstract to be filed with the signature page. This must be done before the publication deadline.
- Once all corrections are made, students will submit their dissertations to the Graduate School using the [Viero's web page](#). Instructions on this process and on the particulars of each of these steps are presented later in this guide.  
  
Students should coordinate with their committees to ensure that each of these steps, including the defense, are finished smoothly and within all published deadlines.

## WRITING THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation should be an independent professional effort finished under the supervision of the faculty. In their dissertations, students should write in clear English and demonstrate an understanding of the literature and research methods of the field. In addition, students should present and document their original research or scholarly activity in an academic manner that is equal to someone with a Doctorate degree. In their dissertations, students should clearly explain how their scholarly activity adds to the literature of the discipline. Students should write their dissertations according to the parameters in the guide that defines uniform standards of style and format but also allows flexibility to satisfy the practices of each academic discipline and the needs of a particular student.

The dissertation should read as a continuous document with continuity from chapter to chapter. While there does need to be a single, unifying Introduction, several studies, experiments, etc., can be presented in separate chapters. Each chapter can have its own subdivisions (Introduction, Discussion, Summary, e.g.). Unless a student's committee chair/discipline dictates otherwise, each dissertation must have only one Abstract and only one Reference section.

The documentation of the research/scholarly activity must be exhaustive. Liberal use of tables and figures is encouraged with a full explanation in the text. Graduate School does not have a minimum or maximum length for a dissertation. Dissertation length varies depending on the topic, discipline and degree sought by the author. Students should write enough to explore their topics fully.

West Texas A&M is a public, regional institution. Its mission clearly implies that any research conducted under its support should ultimately benefit the public. As required by this mission, the Graduate School at West Texas A&M has decided that all dissertations will be made available through open access via the WTAMU digital repository. Students are required to submit their dissertations to this system of open access. Exceptions can only be made with the permission of the Dean of Graduate School.

## HOW TO GET HELP

The first contact for all issues concerning research is the student's major adviser. If the student should need help beyond that, the student should contact the Graduate School.

Students should direct their questions about administrative concerns with the dissertation or about graduation to the Graduate School's dissertation coordinator:

Heather Wilson  
102E Killgore Research Center  
(806)651-2739  
hewilson@wtamu.edu

Students should direct their questions concerning research or the student's committee to the Associate Dean of Graduate School:

Rex Pjesky  
106 Killgore Research Center  
(806)651-2737  
rpjesky@wtamu.edu

## DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION/ARRANGEMENT

Students should arrange the dissertation as follows:

1. Title page
2. Signature Page
3. Preface (optional)
4. Abstract
5. Acknowledgements (optional)
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables (if applicable)
8. List of Figures (if applicable)
9. List of Illustrations (if applicable)
10. Text (work with Chair for organization of the dissertation)
11. List of Works Cited (or References)
12. Appendix

Samples of all of these are at the end of this guide. Students should follow their discipline's style within each of these categories. (Use the reference, citation style that is acceptable to your area of study, for example.)

### **Dissertation Title Page**

The dissertation title page should begin with the title in all caps and centered in inverse pyramid format. Inverse pyramid format means that the title should be in progressively fewer characters as lines are added to the title. If, for example, your title is two lines long, the top line of the title should contain more characters. In addition, if the title is more than one line, the lines should be single spaced. One inch down from the title

centered should be “by” followed by the name of the student double-spaced beneath the word “by.” One inch below that should be:

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
[Degree Name]  
Major Subject: [Major Subject]

One inch below that should be:

West Texas A&M University  
Canyon, Texas  
[Month Year]

### **Dissertation Chapter and Other Major Section Titles and Format**

The beginning of chapter should begin with the title Chapter followed by the appropriate roman numerals in capital letters centered two inches from the top of the page. There should then be a triple space (two blank lines) before the title of the chapter. The title of the chapter should appear in capital letters. If the title of the chapter contains more than one line, single space and use the inverted pyramid form describe above. There is then a double space before the text. Other appropriate heading and subheading may be used as the discretion of your adviser. Graduate School recommends following the style of your field of study. If your discipline has no style manual, follow the guidelines of a leading journal in your field.

All other major sections (Abstract, Preface, etc.) should follow the same general guidelines concerning spacing.

## **Abstract**

Your dissertation must include an abstract of appropriate length (as determined by your project and discipline.) Like all other major sections, the abstract should begin with the title “ABSTRACT” centered two inches from the top of the page and its margins should follow the rest of the document. Abstracts generally have four parts: the problem or purpose of the study, the procedures used in the study, the results of the study, and conclusions of the study.

## **Dissertation Quality Control**

The student alone is responsible, ultimately, for the mechanical correctness, typing accuracy, and general neatness of each draft of the dissertation, including the final draft. The student should carefully proofread the dissertation for all types of errors. Students, not advisers, are solely responsible for the final proofreading before the dissertation and presenting it to the committee members for their final approval.

While he/she is not responsible for the final content, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School will review each dissertation for integrity before Graduate School accepts them.

## **Photographs and Illustrations**

If a student includes photographs and/or illustrations, the student must be able to imbed those into the text of the document. Students should follow the guidelines of their discipline. Any variances must have prior approval of the Dean of Graduate School.

## DISSERTATION FORMAT

### **Dissertation Page Margins**

- Left: 1.5” on all pages
- Right: 1” (not justified) on all pages
- All title pages: 2” from the top of page
- All non-title pages: 1” from the top

### **Dissertation Page Numbers**

- All page numbers must be centered 1” from the bottom of the page.
- On preliminary pages use lower case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.)
- In the body, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)

Consider the title page to be Roman numeral “i,” but do not number it. The first numeral to appear in the dissertation is Roman numeral “ii” on the page that follows the title page. All preliminary pages are numbered by centering one inch above the bottom of the page.

Pagination of the body of the dissertation will begin with the first page of Chapter I. Consecutive Arabic numerals will continue throughout the dissertation, lists of works cited, and appendices. Center the numerals one inch above the bottom of each page.

### **Dissertation Line Spacing**

The body of the dissertation must be double-spaced, except for block quotations and the text within a table, illustration, figure, etc. Text in a table, illustration, figure, etc. can be single or double spaced at the discretion of the student.

### **Dissertation Font and Font Size**

Dissertation should be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Exceptions would be text within tables, figures, illustrations, etc. The text in these should be either 10 or 12-point Times New Roman Font.

### **A Special Note about Most Word Processors**

Students should check the margin spacing of the tables, figures and illustrations. Do not assume that if you have told the word processor to provide a one-inch margin that you always get a one-inch margin. Sometimes the computer will allow parts of large tables to spill into the specified margins.

### **Equations**

Equation numbering and placement is at the discretion of the student but must be consistent. Equations must be in 12-point Times New Roman font.

### **Footnotes/Endnotes**

Footnotes or endnotes can be used at the discretion of the student. They can be numbered sequentially (beginning with “1”) throughout the entire dissertation or can begin with a “1” for each separate chapter.

### **References and Citations**

Each dissertation must have a reference section that lists the literature that the student cites in the dissertation. There must be a one-to-one ratio of literature cited in the text and the list of references at the end of the dissertation. (That is, all things cited in the text must be listed in the Reference section and everything in the Reference section must be cited in the dissertation.) The Reference list should be consistent, accurate, and complete.

The number of reference styles is vast. Although students can use whatever style their discipline uses, the references generally should follow these guidelines:

- Consistency in capitalization, punctuation and ordering of information within each citation
- Consistency in the order of citations (alphabetized, alphabetized and numbered or non-alphabetized and numbered)
- Consistency in the use of italics, quotation marks, and bold type
- Volume number and page number for journal articles must be listed
- Publisher and city for books; city for universities, labs or corporations must be listed
- A date (year) for every citation must be listed
- Sufficient information for retrieval of unpublished material should be present
- Author or entity, title, date or date accessed and the specific web address for Internet material must be listed
- At least five authors before using “et al.” in a multi-authored publication (exception: SPE style uses three)
- Consistency in designation of state names (abbreviated or not)
- Consistency in journal names or abbreviations
- Consistency in ordering multiple entries with same first author.

Students can use either single spacing within each citation and double spacing between each citation or double spacing for everything. Generally, the first line of the

reference is against the left margin while the second and other lines are tabbed in the same distance as paragraphs.

Text mention of citations should follow the style of your discipline.

### **Appendix**

Appendices are optional. They generally are used for supplementary material. The appendix goes after the Reference section. Page numbering continues from the Reference section.

### **Media Files**

If you have files other than PDF document, the [Vireo system](#) can accept them, although they will not be linked to the main dissertation. Please consult your adviser or Graduate School for questions about how to include multimedia or other files with your Dissertation.

## DISSERTATION SUBMITTAL AND REVIEW

The first step in submitting the dissertation is the defense. Students should work with their major advisers and their committees to arrange for the defense of their dissertations. Once the defense is successful and all required changes (if any) are made to the dissertation, students are ready to prepare and submit the dissertation to the Graduate School.

Once the dissertation committee has approved the dissertation, students should convert the dissertation to PDF format to transmit it to the Graduate School. Most current word processors have the ability to convert documents into PDF format.

The student then uploads the PDF file to Graduate School using [Vireo](#), a submission software for electronic dissertations. If you have trouble, please contact the dissertation coordinator or the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

### **Public Availability of the Dissertation**

All dissertations of students graduating from West Texas A&M will be available via the Internet through the [West Texas A&M University Library](#) and the [WTAMU institutional repository](#) through the [Texas Digital Library](#).

Any exceptions, which may be required if there are patent/proprietary issues with an individual student's research, must be granted to the student by the Dean of Graduate School.

Graduate School generally will **not** make exceptions to students wishing to temporarily embargo (or hide) their research for a short time for it to be published. Students need to be sensitive to this. Some journals/publishers allow work to be

published that has been previously published as dissertation and some do not. Students with questions about this policy should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

Students also need to be aware of the possibility of publishing conflicts if they publish part of their research before they finish their dissertation. West Texas A&M permits and encourages students to independently publish research, even before they finish their degrees. However, when students do so, they need to be careful that they do not make any agreements that would prevent West Texas A&M from publishing their work as part of the dissertation. Questions about this should also be directed to the Associate Dean of Graduate School.

### **Corrections to the Dissertation**

If students carefully follow the instructions in this guide, there should be no corrections needed to the dissertation when they submit it to Graduate School. If the Graduate School requires any corrections, students may **ONLY** make the corrections requested by Graduate School.

Graduate School will contact the student via email after the Dissertation Coordinator and/or the Associate Dean reviews the manuscript. The student will make any requested changes to the original file, convert the revised document to a new PDF and upload the new PDF through [Vireo](#). A student should make corrections quickly to meet the deadlines of Graduate School. If a student does not make corrections in a timely fashion, graduation may be delayed.

In the event the Graduate School declares a manuscript unacceptable, the Graduate School will return the manuscript to the student, the major adviser and department head with a clear explanation of the deficiencies that need to be addressed.

Graduate School will review manuscripts in the order received. Students should realize that 5 to 10 working days is a reasonable turnaround time for dissertation review. Students should plan accordingly.

### **Signature Page and Abstract**

The only paper Graduate School requires is a title page, signature page and an abstract. No bound paper copy is required. If the student would like a paper bound copy complete with a signature page, Graduate School and the Library can help facilitate the process. Students may want signed copies for themselves, loved ones, their department or advisers, and the Library.

## DISSERTATION FINAL CHECKLIST

1. Major Adviser and Committee have approved the dissertation.
2. Body of dissertation is double spaced (no more, no less.)
3. The manuscript has been checked for spelling, grammar and style.
4. The references are correct. There is an exact one-to-one match of references at the end and referenced items in the text
5. Margins are correct, including the margins of tables, figures, etc.
6. Page numbers are correct, and agree with Table of Contents, List of Tables, etc.
7. All title pages have 2 inch margin from the top.
8. All other pages have 1 inch margin from the top.
9. All tables and figures fit within the margins.
10. Photographs are properly scanned and look professional.
11. Double check after conversion to PDF.

## DISSERTATION SAMPLE PAGES

Following this page are several examples of what your final document should look like.

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments
- Signature Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- Body (Chapter title format)
- References

EXPLORING THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT  
OF WEB-BASED CLASSROOMS

by

K. Diane Hall

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Major Subject: Agriculture

West Texas A&M University

Canyon, Texas

May 2002

## ABSTRACT

Using Barro regression analysis, this paper finds evidence that per capita state spending on education converged from 1977 to 2006 across the U.S. states. Convergence was conditional on a state's passage of a lottery for education during the time period. Despite evidence that the convergence of state education spending was conditional on the passage of an education lottery, the relative increase in education spending among many states that passed education lotteries was much greater than the revenue from the lotteries themselves. So, education lotteries seemed to be part of a larger bundle of policies in low spending states to increase education funding.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank her major adviser and committee members for their help and guidance.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their love and support and encouragement through my degree.

Approved:

[Chairman, Dissertation Committee] [Date]

[Member, Dissertation Committee] [Date]

[Member, Dissertation Committee] [Date]

[Member, Dissertation Committee] [Date]

[Member, Dissertation Committee] [Date]

[Department Head/Direct Supervisor] [Date]

[Dean, Academic College] [Date]

[Dean, Graduate School] [Date]

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO A REALLY GREAT DISSERTATION: HOW EXACTLY DO YOU FORMAT THOSE CHAPTER HEADINGS?

This chapter introduces the topic about how you write and format a dissertation. Notice how the title is in inverse pyramid form? In this part of the manuscript, since it is an introduction, an author would want to explain to readers what to expect. Then it is on to the first sub heading, which the author can format at his/her own discretion.

#### **Using Double Spaces Properly**

Everyone who writes a dissertation at West Texas A&M needs to know how and when to double space text.

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